

# ABBY

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## Chapter 47 - Trouble

I had no idea of the trouble about to arrive.

We were sitting in the new banquet room of the Cap'n Jackie restaurant built as another and higher elevation of the layered floors there. The big windows all around made it brightly lit in the mid morning. The heavy curtains had all been drawn back for a meeting of our Executive Committee of our seven most important activities and task forces, plus our in-house lawyer Danielle, our Vice-Chair Tara, and myself.

These meetings usually ran way over the scheduled time on Fridays. We tried by asking each activity for a weekly update of two to ten minutes. Could our section reps talk! Tara had a plank with three lights on it. The Green light went on with four minutes to go. The yellow light went on with two minutes to go. The red light meant shut up and sit down in thirty seconds. They kept on talking anyway.

The best time limiter came from over half of the activity representatives had to have their breasts pumped every two hours. The penalty if they didn't became their growing pain from the pressure of unexpressed milk.

One of the former police officers who had become a resident arrived and waved his arms frantically.

*Oh Dear*, I thought, *now what?* "Yes."

He made a quick report. "One of our residents has been found dead on the other side of the Interstate highway. We need a few of the Mansion House leaders over there without over eighty residents making it a mob scene. I gotta go myself." He dashed out.

My eyes surveyed the ten at the big table. "Tara. You go get pumped and changed first. You go there as quickly as possible. Who can tell Misty to capture the images of everyone exiting or entering the restricted area of the Mansion House, and especially the auto garage?" I thought I knew that would be Jennifer, but ask.

She piped up. "I'll talk to Misty."

"Good." I responded. "Thank you. Meeting adjourned until 2:30, and maybe later."

I had to have my breasts pumped the same as Tara, and the changing station insisted on changing my diapers. I had been enjoying my warm wet diaper and fantasizing about my next orgasm in it.

I walked along the highway from our location, under the bridge for the Interstate, and to a small field. Anita lay dead in a dreadful pool of blood from her neck having been sliced.

The horror of her death drew me away from noticing the field's dense population of flowers whose colors ranged from off white to red to magenta. In the center of many were gray-green buds some of which bore the marks of having been scored. A whitish latex oozed from many of those.

Tara stood near me when she muttered. "Opium. Opium poppies." Her voice returned to her. "We have a major addiction problem." The he inside the outward appearance of a she had an extended whispered conversation with Dr. Christina.

The police took control of the death scene. They mumbled the word "murder".

As we walked home, Tara and Dr. Christina alternated sentences as they informed me. "We can't call the police. Half or so of our residents would face criminal prosecution, jail, and prison time. Those places would have a dim view of breast pumping and diapers." The problem they had sensed had been a growing despondency from a hopelessness of ever being out of diapers. The guys didn't seem to mind a warm damp diaper so much and used those for their orgasms. The gals had a growing problem. They few who had tried going without diapers had a sense of hopeless failure. Our psychologists both formally trained and in-house OJT had reported our slogan of "something to do, someone to love, and something to look forward to" had lost much of its clout.

My five sister-wives echoed all this. I asked them. "Why didn't you tell me?"

They had a straight forward answer. "Because you're a guy you would want to fix everything. This doesn't have a fix." They had started their own support group of using only a thin diaper during the day. They found themselves emitting a squeak right before they ran to a toilet. Most of the time they succeeded, but only most of the time.

Misty isolated a pair of videos from the garage of Gail driving out with Anita, but returning without the deceased. Not quite full proof although it gave us a sense of a strong suggestion. The razor blades mounted in box cutter handles were readily available and quite useful for scoring opium poppies. Such a blade with blood residues remained unfound. The best guess became the culprit had thrown it in a passing pickup truck cargo bed. No such knife with blood stains would ever be found.

Tara's students formed a task force for finding out when Gail would be away from her room. They watched from a sitting area down a hall. One of Tara's students went in and out of Gail's room quickly bringing out several plastic packets of opium in various stages of production. They had been hidden in the small of the back of the coveralls she had made for her huge teddy bear.

They confronted Gail that afternoon. She fought back on the insinuation of Anita's death. Gail told them Anita had asked for a ride. After dropping Anita off at the field of pretty flowers, Gail had gone to the grocery store in the shopping center near us. They were out of Oreo cookies. Gail drove to the nearby town where the Walmart had Oreo cookies. On the return trip Gail had not seen Anita in that field. Gail had returned home, parked her car, and went to the kitchen for opening her bag of cookies. She handed out a few at the pumping station and munched on them as she read a book while they pumped her breasts. They didn't change her diapers although she thought

there was no telling with those people. She went to the brightly lit lounge on the top floor for having more cookies and reading the book she had from its making the rounds of the women residents. She thought *The Good Neighbor* to be a terrific read. She went to her room and had an orgasm and a nap. She had the shopping bag for keeping her cookies fresh and inside had the purchase receipt.

“Fine. OK. What about the opium?” The choice they gave Gail became either being arrested and going to prison, or voluntarily entering our little medical facility for a thirty day drug treatment program. She went into treatment as a “no brainer” decision.

The Friday evening of that week I called a major meeting of the residents scheduled for after dinner without announcing why.

Tara and Dr. Christina described the drug issues in glowing detail. No one expected a mass case of going cold turkey. Their call became seek help, take on the despondency, and cut the opium and cocaine to small amounts at discrete times. Friday and Saturday evenings could be best, except the user had to remain mobile enough for travel to the pumping station every two hours. That took the fun out of going deep into an opium session.

No one mentioned testing individual milk production. As best as anyone could determine, cooking and the digestive system wrecked the addictive qualities of any drugs in the milk production.

We had to expand the secure area inside our medical facility for the increasing number of residents asking for treatment. That could include restraints which drove my erotic fantasies wild. I didn't tell my fantasies to my sister-wives.

This drug business discouraged me. I fought hard keeping any depression and despondency at bay. I had thoughts of having someone else take over as Chair of the Mansion House.

## WEEKS LATER - THE WORK FORCE COMMISSION

At another Executive Committee meeting, Danielle had asked for extra time. The Committee voted everyone else would have to be limited to four minutes each. Bless their hearts most of them used only two minutes.

I had taken to enjoying my warm damp diaper and fantasizing about an orgasm in it when the time came for Danielle.

The he inside the feminine exterior concealing his big lactating bust and diapers handed out a seven page packet of paper. For a group of formerly kidnaped abused residents, I continued being amazed we were buying photocopy paper by the pallet. The biggest user continued as the hospital followed by the restaurant, car and truck repair.

The issue Danielle raised came from his research into the state Workforce Commission. Under the Federal rules all 86 of our residents would be classified as employees without regard to their never being paid. Instead, they received full room, board, and employee benefit services in the language of the Commission, and that meant withholding of taxes on the attributed income, plus workers compensation.

Susie from the Garden Shop spoke for all. “You're kidding. She used the “f” word

in “how the ‘f...’ are they going to rate the value of the dining hall, or free fare at the restaurant? Both of those rate as three of four star establishments. Or better.” We rarely used swear words as part of our calming ourselves and providing our love for everyone. She added “free medical care” which meant everything including the hospital and our drug addiction recovery efforts.

The meeting went silent. Danielle gave them time to think as he finger signaled for a restaurant intern to come stand with him, or her to most outsiders meaning those who were not residents we privately called ‘outsiders’. “How about the interns? The jail work release men have a nominal minimum wage although the deductions for costs take most of that. How about the volunteers? The immigrants always work more than eight hours a day. The salaried and tipped staff frequently go overtime without extra hourly compensation. The love they say we exude at them and at each other can’t be quantified as money. Barbie-Doll, isn’t that correct?”

I had long ago wished and asked the he inside the Barbie-Doll exterior to select a less demeaning name. But no, he and his two sex toys Tara and Pat had created that name and were sticking to it. “Yes,” the he inside the she answered, “that is what they tell me. And what about the bizarre circumstance of GranPa Charlie? What are we supposed to do? Throw him out? There would be a mass revolt.”

Many nodded they agreed there would be a major upheaval if anyone removed GranPa Charlie. I knew *I couldn’t do that, so who could?*

What Danielle wanted to do would be to hire one of the outside services that did all the required reporting to the taxation authorities and the State Workforce Commission. Those services had the experience of how to phrase reports and categorize expenses. Danielle added we might have to have an amended Order from the Court that had allowed the Mansion House to exist to begin with.

I disliked Courthouses and Courtrooms intensely and inwardly cringed, but if that would be useful, of course I would.

Danielle concluded with the unhappy thought of the Workforce Commission hadn’t barked at us, but they could arrive with warrant power and without warning.

The price for the outside service seemed awfully high and would put our cash flow in the red for awhile. We hired one.

## MORE WEEKS LATER

The immigrants found an old school bus, and had us buy it. They found two more and overhauled all of them and painted them the Royal Blue of the Blue Bayou Railroad complete with the railroad name. They found more at that poverty stricken school district that had run those busses way past their expected useful life. Under the railroad name they added a line for Mansion House, and beneath that Cedar Valley Trucking with an identification for each of Bus 1, Bus 2, and so on.

In their overhaul work they removed all the passenger seats and found enough decent ones to equip the busses with a reduced number. They spaced the seats for adult length legs. The extra seats were used in their big meeting area under their apartment houses.

We had touched the hearts of the immigrants, which they reciprocated by

equipping those busses with hot and cold food storage, and a small health care clinic of two beds in the very back of each bus. They loaded one of those specialty equipped busses on a flat car and sent it with the track crews working in the heat, humidity, and slimy swamp soil.

One or two of those buses were used for the hot and cold storage of an evening run from the Cap'n Jackie's kitchen to the immigrants communal dinner meal.

Those buses were used as a pair with the third as a backup for the runs north to the poverty pocket where so many of our hired staff came from. The on board health aid brought so many needing hospital care that the hospital across the highway from us wanted a health clinic up there. We sent our Architectural Committee who reported back they had found a building that could be rehabilitated and made into a clinic. We did. They had the exterior painted bright white with Health Clinic in big blue letters. Beneath that they painted Mansion House in smaller letters for bringing that facility within our protective Court Order.

Danielle took the new clinic to Court for an expanded Order. The Court noted how successful we had been and wished us more successes as the Judge signed the Order. We were impressed, and were so charmed we forgot to watch everything about those buses.

The immigrants figured out, had probably been told in their English language classes every evening, who I am. They asked for me to join them in their communal supper in the big breeze way under their apartment house. I squeezed in a little time most evenings, or sent Tara, or someone else. They called me "La Jefe" as the woman Chief. My sister-wives insisted I honor them by going in one of my skirt-suits. For a communal prayer they recited the Twenty-Third Psalm in English which frequently made me cry. They had signs up from our church bulletin of "no matter who you are, or where you are on the path of life, you are welcome here". I would cry again.

## NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE

Our Blue Bayou Railroad had a crises. It had been laying track south until the far end of the track neared the Inland Waterway. Building a bridge over that water the Federal authorities could approve became a daunting expensive challenge. As our railroad investigated further about crossing that, a short distance beyond that waterway a National Wildlife Refuge in a swamp with scattered trees told us they would not let us lay track through their area.

This brought forth the use of swear words we generally avoided. "Whoa."

We left those rails in place, installed a switch, a broad curve, and laid track almost due east. As the track construction neared a state highway the railroad made another broad curve for heading south parallel to that road.

This would bring us to that Inland Waterway again, and we didn't have any answers. A small town had a border a mile beyond the bridge and a town center four miles beyond the bridge. The town went nuts thinking of the tourists and their business our heritage railroad would bring them. I didn't think so, but they might.

The track crews spread more gravel along the track that had been laid we thought we would use as that talking continued. I found that talking became so tedious I tried staying away. No such luck as I became dragged into a seemingly unending

discussion with the town's leaders and active citizens. All of us had an increasing sense of frustration in a four sided struggle of the town, the Refuge, the state highway department, and ourselves.

Into this tension and turmoil we had an unexpected visit. A geologic exploration company wanted to use that leftover length of track to bring in its heavy equipment. They wanted a place with access for their heavy equipment at as far a distance as possible from highways, large ships, and anything else that would cause vibrations in the ground. A few miles of railroad transit didn't have enough value to write an invoice. We answered along the lines of 'sure; why not? Go for it.'

They loaded their heavy drilling rig on a railroad car with a depressed center for carrying double stacked conex containers. Connected to it were two refurbished passenger cars for their lab and living quarters.

Our track crew took a look at the left over stub and saw a problem. The swamp underneath the gravel roadbed had shifted up and down in many places. The special railroad car we had made that spread gravel and tamped it down went to work.

Many of us held our breath as that heavy rail car and drilling rig went slowly on that track pushed by our refurbished 44 ton locomotive.

Nothing awful happened. The drilling rig did not topple sideways into the swamp.

They wanted to drill three holes in our track down through the swamp to a solid sand or clay layer. They did their best with a little removed from six concrete cross ties. They warned us when they would set off explosive charges. We felt the rumbles.

They called us with joy and excitement in their voice to come to their lab. We rode the GE 44 tonner locomotive. They had found gas bearing layers of shale rock beneath our property. With over two square miles of ponds, we owned a large spread of gas bearing rock. Danielle went to work quickly and quietly buying all the land we had been in negotiations for more ponds.

Two days later their site chief rode the GE little locomotive to us. He wanted a very private conversation. We chose one of the historic passenger cars. He wanted it taken on the tracks beyond the shopping center. "OK; why not?"

The exploration crew had found by seismic sounding that a gas well five miles away had been and continued drilling horizontally under our property. His very private question became did we want to litigate that well stealing our gas. We ran the passenger car back home, and collected more of our relevant people including Danielle our lawyer. This time he and we ran that passenger car all the way to their laboratory. They passed electronically to Danielle the equivalent of many bankers boxes of papers worth of records from prior law suits about theft of gas.

Danielle went into hiding in his cubbyhole of an office and would not say anything at meal times. He had meals brought to him. The breast pumping and diaper changing station didn't know enough to press him for information. Two weeks later he called a meeting of half a dozen leading members among the residents. He shared his conclusion of 'yes' we should sue, but first take security precautions.

Misty worked on ever more security cameras and automatic alarm systems.

We asked Danielle if he wanted a major law firm in on this. He called the exploration people. They reported way too much bad conduct. They felt law firms had been paid off. Kittie our Banking Representative and expert went to our bank Commercial Loan Department. They too reported prior troubles.

Danielle spent another week in seclusion drafting what he thought would be a suitable opening paper called a Complaint. He explained planting errors in that document so that the Defendants would have something to attack for which he had prepared a response. He explained Judges used the opening fighting back and forth for understanding complex litigation. He wanted to file in Federal Court, but that required an out of state co-plaintiff. The exploration people found him one.

I hate going to Courts. Danielle made me. Our case had been assigned to a gruff old retired Judge with a distinct aversion to Danielle dressed as a woman lawyer having a man's voice. On our hour long rides back and forth to Court Danielle explained to me how to watch for the Judge wanting us to succeed. That Judge made it very hard on us which Danielle explained as necessary for us to win.

Four months into this case the gas drilling company filed for Bankruptcy Protection. Danielle moved to be admitted to that Court. The bankruptcy case had an assigned Judge of a woman who could glare the same as every other Judge I had ever watched. She scared me even more.

Danielle bought an expensive law book with a red cover called *Bankruptcy Code, Rules, and Forms*. He subscribed to an expensive legal research service which we paid for. In Bankruptcy Court everything is called a Motion with a Bankruptcy Code number such as a Section 727 Motion. That kind of talk drove me nuts. Danielle nearly danced and sang as he called a meeting of me, Tara as Vice-Chair, Kittie as the Banking Committee, and a few others. He had found a Federal Bankruptcy Law that barred the drilling company from having a "discharge" of our claim. That too required lengthy explanations to us undereducated non-legal types who hadn't wanted to know.

Further, that Bankruptcy Court took jurisdiction of our original suit. That trip to the San Diego Bankruptcy Court for those coach limousines became a valuable training ground for us. The Judge told the litigants we had better go out in the hall and settle this, or else. She frightened me again with my not having a clue of what "or else" might include. The drilling company wouldn't settle. Danielle explained to me our confrontation had become a strategic issue for drilling companies. My gut clenched up with pain.

The Judge listened patiently to a long presentation by expensive counsel for the drilling company. The Office of the United States Trustee made a major point of the legal fees for the drilling company as the "Debtor" were subject to Court approval. I sat next to Danielle at one of the heavy tables in front of the railing across the Courtroom. He held his hand down flat for me to remain quiet as I prepared myself for making an oral counterattack.

Danielle stood up, went to that podium in the center front, gripped it tightly with both hands, and started. "I am Danielle Pierce. I am a Resident of the Mansion House and also Counsel to the Mansion House as the primary Plaintiff in this Adversary Proceeding. I believe this Court understands this case very well. I repose on the Court's understanding, and ask the Court to rule on the Motion for the Complaint as it now stands."

Danielle terrified me with saying so little.

The Court responded with a heavy but neutral voice. "Plaintiff's Motion is Granted. The Court will prepare the order." The Court went on with how the Defendant could file an appeal to the next higher court which would be right back at that same gruff old judge in that Court.

I wept. When we all stood up I leaned forward on that heavy table as I felt a lump being made in my wet diaper.

They did appeal. That gruff old judge spent little time affirming the Bankruptcy Court order making it into a Federal District Court order. He pointed out they could appeal to the Federal Fifth Circuit Court, and added a comment such an appeal would put this case into the national Court records. Did they really want to do that?

No, they did not.

The Mansion House now had a new major additional inflow of income. We no longer had to fret about paying for major expenses such as outside training, heavy trucks, apartment houses, locomotive parts and kits, and railroad gravel. Our bank's representatives gushed with joy. Our small finance committee became a Standing Task Force with control of the expenditures.

## CROSSING THE INLAND WATERWAY

We still needed our railroad to cross the Inland Waterway.

The town a short distance on the other side wanted our railroad. That town had been nearly wiped out by flooding from two recent major hurricanes. They viewed the railroad as an economic savior. I had my doubts about that phantom success. A business named 'Bait 'n' Bullets' thought any boost in tourists could make a big jump in the local recreational fishing business. He pointed out bringing intermediate sized new fishing boats by railroad would definitely help the town's fishing image. They took one look at the two gravel hoppers we were using and saw advantages in bringing in building materials by rail. A pair of our railroad volunteers were having a beer in that town when the waitress and barmaid told them the local Liquefied Natural Gas plant had not been having any success with an environmental permit. Maybe they could ship by rail. We had a sudden change in our thinking about how our railroad could be used for heavy freight. With the gas revenue we could afford much more gravel, and an industrial built pair of railcars for spreading and tamping gravel. Of course those needed major maintenance, especially the diesel motors, and a paint job in hazard yellow.

Multiple people had a similar idea at the same time. Could we cut groves in the deck of the highway bridge over the Inland Waterway for our railroad track? The state responded 'no' as the bridge could hold the weight of an 80,000 pound big rig truck, but not one of our big, beautiful, royal blue, diesel locomotives at around 270,000 pounds. Talk did not prevail. The state wouldn't budge.

The next highway bridge to the east a few miles away had been built as floating bridge. Seemed weird at first. We drove there and talked with the operators. At least those daunting costs no longer seemed so awful. Wheelchair Bob explored on the internet for options.

One of the options became to build the bridge as high as the power lines, or as high as the vertical lift highway bridge when raised. That would require a long series of pedestals and bridge spans for raising the railroad at a reduced grade the trains could

handle. Those would be on the unstable swamp. That seemed expensive and unreliable. Only the concrete supplier would be happy with that.

Another option could be a vertical lift bridge similar to the highway bridge that lifted the span at both ends.

The locomotive engineers did not want to run a ferry boat with all of its complications in fact and right of way rules. Horror of horrors - what if the ferry boat's engine quit in mid stream?

A rolling lift bridge did not save all that much money compared to a vertical lift bridge. Both would require extensive concrete support down to a hard sand or clay layer. Our concrete supplier would be charmed with such a big order; we would not.

In all this chaos Wheelchair Bob found a new resource. We still called him Wheelchair Bob although his girl friend had finally talked him out of the wheelchair he didn't really need when another resident did. We continued calling him the full length version as a single word. He had an amazing number of contacts in the communities on the internet of used trucks and equipment, repair parts, junk yards, and surplus sales. In talking with a naval base in the next state he had heard about a whole flock of pontoon boats arriving from the Ukraine. The Ukrainian Army knew all about railroads on pontoons from the Soviet Army of World War II. The Ukrainians didn't want those pontoons and their decks sitting around where a Russian airborne landing could seize those and use them for a Russian lightning strike across the Ukraine. Those pontoon boats and accessories were arriving at the Jacksonville, Florida, naval base. The U.S. military had little use for pontoon bridging across lakes and broad rivers.

The purchase price came to almost nothing. Tug boats pulled or pushed them in the same way they did barges all the time through the Inland Waterway. We flew a Ukrainian expert in to consult which became to supervise. By the time he had his way our pontoon bridge had decking for cars, trucks, and heavy tanks.

Many of us went to watch the first train across. The video crews were charmed with our vintage steam locomotive pulling a pair of gravel hopper cars, our spreader and tamper car, and with our vintage passenger car making our short train into a lovable photo op. Wheelchair Bob in vintage railroad coveralls served as the honorary pontoon boats captain. Or is that a bosun? The National Guard came with armored vehicles and a re-enactor group brought a working M4 Easy Eight Sherman tank of World War II. The Cours Tank Farm sent a Russian T34-85 tank of similar vintage. An American and a German half-track of those ages joined the party. The last weight test arrived of the Krystal Krew towing three heavily loaded oil tankers. Shannon and Krystal waved from their truck cab windows as Kayla walked ahead facing backwards watching for any hints of trouble. It all worked.

The success of all those struggles made me cry.

The nearby town assembled a long string of modern and vintage automobiles. Later they suffered a catastrophe when one end of their lift bridge failed and jammed. The span had enough clearance when down for most tug boats which meant the bridge had not been lifted often. Infrequent use caused trouble when one end kept lifting when the other end didn't. The truss structure at the low end crunched into that tower. Their bridge took eleven weeks to repair during which our pontoon bridge cheerfully carried all the traffic. When they finished their bridge could carry two of our heavy diesel locomotives. The railroad tracks were in the center. Only a very narrow car such as a

Smart ForTwo could pass a train on the bridge.

A red F-150 pickup truck dodged around the lowering arms for blocking traffic as a train approached the lift bridge from the other end. The pickup truck driver charged onto the bridge only to make a screeching halt in front of our locomotive. He leaned on the horn, honked repeatedly in frustration, and vehemently cursed for that locomotive to get out of his way.

Our locomotive engineer found it funny for the driver of a 5,000 pound pickup truck to scream at a 270,000 pound locomotive. The locomotive sat there going nowhere as all of its doors were locked electronically.

The pickup driver climbed on the locomotive front end, tried opening the door in the center front, and banged with his fists on the door and the locomotive solid steel front end. He quit when both of the town's two available part time police officers interrupted him. They handcuffed his hands behind him.

The truck had been stolen. The driver had escaped from prison, and 'on the run'. This became a biggest arrest ever for this little town.

## STAFFING THE BIG BLUE LOCOMOTIVES

We had two sets of our big blue diesel locomotives running on the single track passing us for the BNSF and UP railroads. Each set had six of those monsters with more on the way for making eight in each set.

Having major money coming at us from the gas exploration didn't stop our old expense watching habits. I wondered if maybe I should pass off being the Chair to someone who could manage money better than the old miserly penny pinching methods that had us surviving all that prior history.

I waited at our railroad siding as a BNSF/UP locomotive team waited for relieving our locomotive team from running from our location to the engine exchange depot at Winslow, Arizona, and returning. Our team appeared beat from operating for too many hours at a stretch.

I asked Tara to talk with our locomotive engineers as I caught a ride on our locomotives to the nearest railroad District Division Office. My first impression from riding in one of our big locomotives became the high volume of noise from the huge V-16 diesel engine right behind the cab. I asked myself *could that noise damage hearing?*

Half an hour later, or so, I dismounted at the railyard of a small city in the next state. But no District Supervisor. They told me he would be at a larger office in another town several miles to the north on the next day. That became corrected to maybe on the next day. Instead of walking in the high humidity with the chance of sweat soaking my skirt-suit, I called Wheelchair Bob. An intern answered who sent another to chase after him.

He quickly realized my need for better breast pumping than the small pump hidden in my big red shoulder bag, and I would need more diapers in a hurry. He called the hospital near us we had founded where I had occasionally served as Charitable Director for fund raising, or on their Board of Directors, or, at that moment, on an Advisory Board. Our hospital called the Southeast Baptist Hospital near where I had landed. Bob warned me their website included their Baptist faith. *Oh well*, I thought,

*maybe I could squeak through that with my choir and deacons credentials from our nearby church.*

They made space for me in a Sleep Ward. The nurses there were kind enough about my 'medical conditions'. A Chaplain visited me as I sat up in bed having my breasts pumped. I deflected his fundamental faith teachings with my progressive views about who Jesus had been with a few ragged quotes from *Saving Jesus From The Church*, and *Wisdom Jesus*. I had a resource he had never heard of from a video teaching series by Jodie Magness on an archeological view of the Biblical era Holy Lands. We agreed the original *King James* version of the Twenty-Third Psalm could not be improved. I faked a yawn and he scurried away. A nurse brought me two faith books by Elaine Pagels which I enjoyed between naps. Naps were OK in a Sleep Ward. I rated the food on a form as acceptable, but didn't really think so with our own hospital receiving national recognition from the patients' comments for the kitchen. Unknown to many our hospital had quality and support from our Cap'n Jackie restaurant.

Two days later I escaped in a taxi to the town ten miles north with a bigger railroad facility complete with, of all the least likely things, an old fashioned turntable. The District Supervisor met with me in a cruddy work room piled high with papers and file folders. I thanked him for making time for me. He wanted the brass tacks version.

We quickly agreed the new Federal corporate tax law had cut in half the tax reduction value of the railroad donating old obsolete locomotives to us. There had been new developments. The two locomotive rebuild plants near Fort Worth, Texas, were not, and could not, keep up with the demand for rebuilding the twenty or more years old Dash 8 GE locomotives of the model given to us. No pesky environmental inspections of the Blue Bayou Railroad as our locomotives were never parked on BNSF or UP property, and were not on their property schedules. No annoying interference from the labor Union. He valued our train crews were polite, pleasant, and responsive. Not much of the snarky, caustic, swear word laden comments from their own unionized crews. Our crews paid attention to the Operating Notices and watched the training videos. Our crews asked good questions typically of when would the track be clear for rolling their train, or did the slow speed notice continue for track repairs.

The first time a Cedar Valley Trucking road train of oil tankers had pulled into a train yard had been difficult for him. Then he got it and found it funny. Our diesel fuel cost less than his diesel fuel. He thought the BNSF and UP were the biggest discount buyers for making the biggest bulk purchases. Could I send him a few of our fuel bills?

"Sure. But I think I know. We buy at the plant and haul in our own tankers. No fuel tax as that is paid from the pumps. They never see our use of diesel fuel includes locomotives." And I added, "we buy our own tractor trucks from Mexico. We stop at every big rig truck in trouble and every little passenger car too. Make a brief visit at your local Interstate Travel Stop and see if they have a picture on the wall of "Shannon", and maybe a donation box for stranded travelers. That is our Shannon. She came to us as an Intern who wanted to drive the big trucks. Whenever one of our women driver teams needs help, their radio has the State Police frequency. 'This is Shannon on Cedar Valley cab whatever number, we are at a breakdown near milepost whatever, and need help.' Average time before they hear a siren is four to five minutes. Our locomotives can connect to the Cedar Valley dispatcher. Your tracks parallel the Interstate. Our train crews call in too even though they can't stop. So, three guesses why we are never challenged on the fuel tax."

His head nodded an acknowledgment of my statement. He asked if we could

rebuild more locomotives.

“Sure. How many at a time so we can put a roof over a new repair track. How can we know you will keep on leasing?”

He responded he couldn't make any guarantees as if he did, that would be a reportable contract. “Don't fret. If they ever close it down, wait a few weeks for the bruhaha to blow over and we'll be back. Your ton-mile rates are less expensive. More important, you never break down. I know how you do that. If one of your locomotives suffers a failure, your crew shuts it down and tows it home. Works for me. Especially works for me when compared to a long heavy stalled train in the middle of the desert.”

I scurried out of there before I took up too much more of his time, or he thought of an adverse development. I had the taxi drive me all the way home for 45 or 50 minutes on the clock. I could feel things about to happen. I barely had my good skirt-suit off at the Mansion House when I made a big lump in my diaper. The changing station told me that lump could be the largest they had seen.

He found a way to tell his higher ups by making a video of our refueling our locomotives. Their PR department responded 'no'. We used it.

#### SLEEPER/DINER CAR

He made a recommendation for our crew fatigue. Rehabilitate an older steel frame passenger car with three axle trucks as a diner and sleeper for our train crew. Equip it for locomotive signaling and splice it in the middle of our string of locomotives. We liked the idea. Wheelchair Bob found two for sale. The immigrants took on this project. Our crews loved it. Mansion House residents could ride it as a form of their seeing the world even though that would mostly be the dry southwestern desert. A seven foot truck sleeper cab became a seventy foot sleeper railcar with space for a small Smart ForTwo car for trips to grocery stores and emergencies. After the first two cars the immigrants took to building the next one from scratch using derelict three axle locomotive trucks. A Federal inspector didn't like it not having Amtrak special passenger train couplers. He relented, reluctantly, when we pointed out it would never be in a passenger train, and had locomotive compliant connections.

My few phone calls with the Division Superintendent convinced me even more I wanted my voice to be more appropriate for my feminine appearance. He didn't seem so uptight when he didn't have to look at me when we talked on the phone. That way my masculine voice seemed right to him.